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OBITUARY NOTICES OF MEMBERS DECEASED.

FREDERICK FRALEY, LL.D.,

PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY.

(Read December 20, 1901.)

Frederick Fraley, the fifteenth President of the American Philosophical Society, died on the 23d day of September, 1901, in the ninety-eighth year of his age. He had been an active member of the Society for more than fifty-nine years. After long service as a Secretary and as a Vice-President, he, on 2d January, 1880, received the merited honor of an election to the Presidency, and for more than twenty-one years he administered that office of great distinction, as he performed every duty, with fidelity and ability.

He brought to the discharge of his many duties a wide acquaintance with books, with men, and with affairs.

He was always, and to the very end, a student and an omnivorous reader. To paraphrase a famous saying, nothing was too great for his care and nothing too trivial for his attention. He mastered the political, the economic, and the industrial history of his country. He made himself profoundly learned in everything that could possibly have relation to the national finances, and he became a reservoir of accurate and thorough information as to the loans and the currency of the United States. He kept himself in touch with the scientific progress of the nineteenth century. He read not only many of the best books of his time, but he also from time to time found, as many other men have found, mental rest and recreation in works of fiction, old and new. And with it all, he never failed to hear the news of the day and to feel and express a lively interest in everything of real importance that went on in the world.

Mr. Fraley was a member of the Committee of Arrangements for the Society's Centennial Celebration of 1843. On 19th October, 1877, he read before the Society a brief but comprehensive and sympathetic biographical notice of his brother-in-law, John C. Cresson. On 15th March, 1880, he presided upon the occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Society, and he then delivered an address, in which he fittingly described

the services to the Society which had been severally performed by each of his fourteen predecessors in the Presidency, with all of whom, excepting the first three, he had been personally acquainted, and with the last six of whom he had been upon terms of intimate friendship. On 3d November, 1882, he contributed to the Society's PROCEEDINGS a minute upon the Bi-Centennial Celebration of that year. On 21st November, 1889, he presided over the Society's commemoration of the Centennial Anniversary of the occupation of its present hall, and he delivered an instructive address, in which he briefly commented upon the most important points in the history of the Society. On 17th April, 1890, on the occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of the death of Benjamin Franklin, he eulogized the illustrious founder of the Society. On 23d May, 1893, the one hundred and fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Society, Mr. Fraley presided and delivered graceful speeches welcoming the guests of the Society.

Mr. Fraley attended the meetings of the Society with, as he said, "reasonable regularity" until, in his later years, physical infirmities deprived him of that pleasure. He had, from the time of his admittance to the Society, a pride in its history and achievements, a full appreciation of its lofty purposes, and a confident hope that it will, as he expressed it in his speech of 1889, "Rouse itself up with energy to the work that is demanded of it at the present time and use the means and the influence that it has, and the power that it ought to exercise, in the community for the promoting of everything connected with usefulness to man—everything that will tend to improve his moral and intellectual character, and everything that will enable him to rise with higher appreciation to what is good."

Mr. Fraley said, in his address of 1889, "If I have had any useful career in life, I owe much to what I have learned in the Franklin Institute and in the American Philosophical Society." In his earlier years his participation in the proceedings of the Franklin Institute gave him a love of study and an interest in the scientific and industrial progress of the world. In the years of his maturity his mind was broadened by his association with the men who then constituted the membership of this Society, and with them he learned to "love truth for truth's sake."

Mr. Fraley was for eighty years an active man of business. After a preliminary training in a store, he was for fourteen years a

partner in a mercantile firm. He was for seven years the Secretary of the American Fire Insurance Company. He was for twenty-three years the President of the Schuylkill Navigation Company, which during that period operated its canals as successfully as could be in the face of active and increasing railroad competition. He was, during the years of preparation, the brief six months of exhibition, and the subsequent years of liquidation, the Treasurer of the Centennial Board of Finance, and as such he was the custodian and disbursing officer of the many millions of dollars which were received and expended in the successful conduct of the great Exhibition of 1876. For the last twenty-three years of his life he was the President of the Western Saving Fund Society, and during the years of his wise administration the deposits of that Society grew from less than three millions of dollars to almost sixteen millions of dollars and its assets increased in a larger proportion.

Mr. Fraley possessed in a high degree the qualifications that are desirable in the official head of a corporation that has charged itself with the duty of keeping safely the moneys of its depositors, and which does not have shareholders for whom dividends are to be made. He had an ever-present conscientious sense of duty to those to whom the corporation stands in a fiduciary relation. He had that conservative temperament which indisposed him to risk anything in a doubtful investment, however tempting its promises of profits. While during his later years he may sometimes have seemed to be too cautious, it was, if an error, certainly an error upon the right side. He knew thoroughly the history and the principles of the science of finance. He could weigh with discriminating judgment the reasons for or against any particular course of action. He could say "No," pleasantly but firmly. Down to the last day of his active business life, and that was as recently as the tenth day of the May preceding his death, he could not only, as is usual with very old people, remember the events of long ago, but he could report accurately and in detail discussions and conclusions of recent days. He was especially remarkable in a difficult exercise of memory, in that he was accustomed to calculate by mental arithmetic the annual yield of an investment bought at a premium and with a postponed maturity. For the accomplishment of that result men of a less mathematical turn of mind, and with a weaker memory, habitually use printed tables prepared for that purpose. Mr. Fraley had early in life formed the habit of precise and

accurate statement, and he never, to the knowledge of those who were closely associated with him, made a mistake in mentioning a name or a figure. This too must be said : Mr. Fraley was to his subordinates the most delightful of chiefs. He was uniformly courteous and considerate under circumstances pleasant or trying, and he was always anxious to give to any one who served under his command more than full credit for whatever was done.

But neither the daily work of business, nor the delights of literature, nor active participation in the duties and the pleasures of this Society could sufficiently absorb Mr. Fraley's energies. In 1824 Mr. Fraley was one of the founders of the Franklin Institute, and for seventy-seven years he was an active member of that Society of world-wide reputation and distinguished achievements, whose doors have been always open to receive students of science and the useful arts. In 1853 Mr. Fraley took his seat as a Trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, and during his forty-eight years of service that great institution of learning has, by reason of the earnest efforts of its successive Provosts, Trustees, and instructors, the loyal support of its Alumni, and the generous gifts of money by the broad-minded men and women who have written their names upon the roll of the benefactors of the University, become the centre of the intellectual life of Philadelphia and one of the foremost colleges of the country.

Dr. William Pepper, to whom this Society and the University owe debts which never can be paid, said of Mr. Fraley, that during more than forty years "he had been prominently engaged in all the efforts which had brought the University to the prosperous and powerful position she now commands. He enjoyed in a rare degree the love and confidence of Trustees and Faculties, and no language could convey an adequate sense of the value of his benignant influence, of his universal charity, of his wise counsels, and of his constant loyal co-operation. I am confident the University never had a truer friend, nor a more faithful and unselfish servant."

Mr. Fraley was in 1833 a founder, and for sixty-eight years a member, for sixty-seven years a Director, and for fourteen years the President of the Philadelphia Board of Trade, which, under his leadership, has devoted itself to the improvement of facilities for transportation by land and water, to the increase of commerce, to the growth of manufactures, to the maintenance of a solid financial

system, and, in Mr. Fraley's words, to "the development of those impersonal interests that make the prosperity of a great city."

Upon the formation, in 1868, of the National Board of Trade as a federation of all the commercial organizations of the country, Mr. Fraley was chosen as its President, and for thirty-three years he was successively re-elected to that high office by the unanimous action of delegates coming from every part of the country, and bound to him by no tie other than a just appreciation of his character, ability, and impartiality.

In all of the many bodies, corporate or voluntary, public, business, or social, over which Mr. Fraley presided, or in whose deliberations he actively participated, for so many years and to the end, he was a forceful leader, for he always had clear and decided views upon all questions which came to be considered, he had the courage and the ability to give to those views adequate expression, and he had the tact and equability of temper which enabled him not only to persuade but also to convince.

He was an exceptionally well-qualified presiding officer. He had a thorough knowledge of parliamentary law and practice and an unusual readiness in the application of his knowledge. He was instinctively fair-minded, and, therefore, he was always impartial. He had an unrivaled facility of felicitous expression, and, to those who could appreciate him, it was an intellectual pleasure to listen to the graceful speeches which he was, from time to time, accustomed to address to the Societies and Boards over which he presided.

He had a strong sense of public, as well as of private, duty, and he had no sympathy with that spirit of destructive criticism which contents itself with deploring the existence of evils which it does not try to mend.

He held public office, and he achieved results in State and municipal politics, without sacrifice of independence or loss of self-respect. In 1839 he was a member of the National Convention of the Whig Party, which nominated William Henry Harrison for election as President of the United States. From 1834 to 1837 he sat in the Common Council of the old City of Philadelphia. From 1837 to 1840 he served with credit in the Senate at Harrisburg. In 1834 he successfully accomplished, against the opposition of the most respectable conservatism of the leading citizens of that day, the introduction of street and house lighting by gas, and his

was the financial plan which made possible at that time the construction and operation of the municipal gas works. In 1853, 1854 and 1855 he actively participated in the popular efforts to secure the consolidation of the city, and his is the plan of municipal financing and accounting which is now in force, unchanged by later legislation, and largely effective to-day in the high credit of the city loans.

His was the plan under which Girard College was successfully administered as a school for orphans before the organization of the Board of City Trusts.

When in 1861 the existence of the Government of the United States and the permanency of free institutions were threatened by an armed insurrection, Mr. Fraley saw clearly the duty of the citizen, and he voiced the sentiments of that loyalty which put country above party in words which are worthy of lasting record. On 30th November, 1861, he published a letter, in which he said :

“I have both publicly and privately expressed the following opinions hitherto, and have so far seen no cause for changing them.

“First—That it is the duty of every one, with head, heart, hand and purse, to aid the general Government in putting down the rebellion, and in reducing to obedience to the Constitution and laws of the United States those who are in arms against the sovereign authority of the Union. That aid is to be cordially given, with a proper confidence that those who have been entrusted by the American people with the responsibilities of power will honestly and faithfully execute the high trusts committed to them.

“Second—That we are not engaged in a war for the prevalence of any peculiar set of political opinions, but one which is to determine by its results whether we have a National Government, binding in absolute, supreme and complete sovereignty over individuals and States for every object defined in the Constitution of the United States, or whether the nation is to be broken up by every accidental majority that may place State Legislatures in the power of traitors or fanatics.

“Third—That, having by the Constitution and various compromise laws given to the institution of slavery every protection hitherto which it could legitimately claim, and having failed thereby to avoid an appeal to a power outside of the Constitution (the appeal to arms made by the traitors of the South), it is now our duty so to deal with the slave question that it shall no longer

jeopard the peace, happiness and prosperity of the people of the United States, and that the thoughts of every patriot should be turned to measures for the gradual abolition of slavery, by compositions with loyal citizens of the South for the freedom of all persons born after a certain day, and by the speedier method of immediate freedom, with properly guarded and limited political and social rights, for the slaves of all who may continue in treason and rebellion."

Those of us who were living at that time and who remember the conflict of opinion in Philadelphia between the supporters and the opponents of the Government, and the strong personal and social influences which were arrayed in this city against a vigorous prosecution of the war, will fully appreciate the force of Mr. Fraley's frank declaration and will regard it as both patriotic and statesmanlike.

It is but right to add in this connection that no one more fully than Mr. Fraley rejoiced in later years that the wounds of war had been healed and that North and South were united under one flag in the full enjoyment of a common prosperity.

Animated by the sentiments to which he had given such clear expression, Mr. Fraley as a private citizen loyally supported the Government in all its efforts to raise men and secure money for the suppression of the insurrection, and his only regret was that his years forbade him to serve as a soldier in the field. In furtherance of his patriotic purposes he became one of the founders of the Union League, and he labored earnestly for the success of the Sanitary Commission Fair of 1864.

So long as the relative rates and costs of production of gold and silver preserved an approximate stability in the market prices of the metals Mr. Fraley, as a scientific bimetallist, advocated the double or alternating standard of value; but when the conditions changed, no one more clearly than he saw that to admit silver to free coinage would result in silver monometallism, and would inevitably be followed by national repudiation and individual bankruptcies. He, therefore, vigorously opposed the silver legislation of 1878 and 1890, and in 1891 he appeared as a representative of the Philadelphia Board of Trade before the Coinage Committee of the House of Representatives and, as the report of the Board of Trade for that year states, "going over the history of the coinage laws of the United States, from the beginning of the nation down to that

time, and giving a clear exposition of the laws of trade in relation to the action and influences of the coinage of the precious metals under the different ratios of silver to gold, he argued that inevitable danger and disaster would ensue should the bill pass authorizing the free and unlimited coinage of the silver of the whole world at the artificial standard contemplated." The result was that "the Coinage Committee, on February 20th, reported the Free Coinage bill to the House with an adverse recommendation."

One of Mr. Fraley's audience upon that occasion, Mr. William V. McKean, for so many years the honored Editor-in-Chief of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, and by reason of his knowledge of the financial history of the country and his trained intelligence a most competent critic of such a performance, has recently said of Mr. Fraley's speech that it covered the whole history of the silver coinage from the beginning of the Government to the date of its delivery, that it omitted nothing historically or inferentially which could elucidate the subject, and that spoken as it was by a man then eighty-seven years of age, without reference to a paper or a note, and compressed and clear, it was, in its character and in its effect upon its hearers, nothing less than marvelous.

In the memorable national campaign of 1896 Mr. Fraley assisted by his wise counsel in the educational and other efforts of the Sound Money League of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Fraley had throughout his life an exceptional facility in attracting and attaching friends to himself. To mention all of those with whom during his life he was on terms of intimate friendship would be to give the names of not only the best citizens of Philadelphia, but also the names of many distinguished men from every part of our country for the last seventy years. He drew all these men to himself by his kindness of heart, his unfailing courtesy, his sincerity, his wide and varied information and his keen sense of humor.

It is deeply to be regretted that he never committed to writing the reminiscences of men and of affairs with which he was accustomed to interest those who were fortunate enough to be admitted into intimate intercourse with him.

Mr. Fraley never undervalued the uses or the advantages of wealth, yet he did not care for wealth for its own sake, and he thought that there were other things in life better worth having, such as the truth, the steadfastness, the unselfishness, the charity and the peace of conscience that go to the making of and accompany

a fine character, and, having these better things, he had no cause to envy people who have wealth and nothing more.

In the later years of his life Mr. Fraley had to endure the physical infirmities of old age in diminished powers of locomotion and in defective eyesight, amounting almost to blindness. He bore his trials patiently and bravely, and he was spared the more distressing infirmities of old age, for he retained his clearness of mind to the last hour of his conscious existence.

It is not surprising that Mr. Fraley should have lived to years far beyond the period of the life of most men, for he inherited from his sturdy ancestry a vigorous constitution, he led a regular and a temperate life, without excesses and without undue restraint upon enjoyment, he never gave way to anger or to vain repinings, and he was uniformly cheerful and hopeful.

Mr. Fraley was born in the last year of President Jefferson's first administration and he died after President Roosevelt had succeeded to office. During his lifetime the railway, the steamship, the telegraph, and the telephone have revolutionized civilized existence; villages have grown to be great cities; our country has survived the shock of foreign and of civil war; its States, which had been separated by distance and by time, and which had been united only in name, have been welded into a nation which is to-day one of the great empires of the world. In other countries ruler after ruler has ascended the throne and has in his turn passed away; frontiers of kingdoms have been obliterated and new frontiers created; and the map of Europe, of Asia, and of Africa has been changed again and again.

To have lived through the period when these momentous events were happening, and after ninety-seven years to have died in the unimpaired enjoyment of his mental faculties, would have made any man remarkable; but Frederick Fraley, as he was known to the men who were closest to him, was remarkable not only because of his long life and not only because of the century, through almost the whole of which he had lived, but also and chiefly because of his varied knowledge, his power of expression, his steadfastness of purpose, and his many attractive qualities.

It can be said of Frederick Fraley, as of few men, that he never shrank from the performance of any duty, that he was faithful to every trust, that his continued living was a pleasure and his death a personal loss to all who knew him.

C. STUART PATTERSON.